

Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy, vol. 12, no. 2, 2016

PARSING TO THE SOURCE: FROM FORM TO LIGHT, FROM KNOWN TO KNOWING, FROM SUBSTANCE TO VOID

Jack Engstrom

ABSTRACT: Portions of Arthur M. Young's Theory of Process and G. Spencer-Brown's *Laws of Form* (*LoF*) are presented as deep (ultimate) ontic and epistemic ways, respectively, to parse the Universe and our experience into parts of wholes: both systems include the observer/experiencer/agent as an integral part of the Universe, with a partial unity of knower and known.

In Young's theory, the Universe is generated by dividing Wholeness: into three, creating substance; and into four, creating form; and their combination, giving the formed substance of molecular matter. (Then from matter, Life acquires powers, in stages.) Reversing the sequence of generation gives an ontic parsing into Wholeness and its divisions.

Spencer-Brown's neoPlatonic ontology has radiant Being at its ontic center, with existence at its periphery (or surface), and has at its epistemic center a knowing being. The epistemology of *LoF* deconstructs our knowledge of existence to successively-more-central fields: of truth, then of indications, then of The Form of some first distinction, and finally to a Void which can include a knowing being. This deconstruction has an analogy in 'retracting ones psychological projection', resulting in liberating self-realization.

KEYWORDS: Parsing; Arthur M. Young; Process; Theory of process; Action; Source; Self-up; Absolute direction; Light; Lightspace; Transcendent; First cause; Creating; Ontology; Ontic principals; Wholeness; Integral; Being; Becoming; Nonbeing; Void; G. Spencer-Brown; Laws of Form; Distinction; Epistemic; Knowledge; Logic; NeoPlatonic; Form; Existence; Nonexistence; Deconstruction; Qualia; Inner experiential; Observer; Self; Truth; Seeing; Projections; Consciousness

Epigram

"The ultimate goal is to *regain the whole* by knowing how the parts fit together."
(italics mine)—Arthur M. Young, *The Geometry of Meaning* p.xv

A. INTRODUCTION: DEEP FIT BETWEEN CORE WHOLENESS AND THE DIVERSITY IN THE WORLD, AND BETWEEN INNER- AND OUTER-EXPERIENCE

I present two systems which reveal a deep fit between the parts or aspects of the Universe and a Wholeness that includes a light-space able to create the Universe and to be consciousness. The first is by Arthur M. Young, the second is by G. Spencer-Brown. It is my view that both systems penetrate *all the way through* existence into a fundamental-ground that is a Wholeness, a Wholeness that is prior to the differentiation that gives rise to the diversity of the World. In addition, both systems offer intellectual tools that can serve as bridges between inner- and outer-experience, allowing an integration into a wholeness of experience that can include spirit and higher-consciousness.

A.1. *Source, axis mundi, and absolute direction*

Many mythologies/cosmologies have some version of an ‘axis mundi’, a vertical connection between an unseen Heaven or creative Source *above* and our visible and tangible Earth below. In Young’s theory the creative Source corresponds to light and other kinds of undivided potent Wholeness, which also functions as the vertical connection when light or Wholeness descends to interact with earth or matter. G. Spencer-Brown’s vision is neoPlatonic, and the Source, instead of being above, is *inward*, in “the center (or navel)” of each thing: it is pure radiant Being (and “has to be divined”), while existence is at the periphery or surface, perceivable by our senses such as touch. Essentially this “vertical connection” to Source defines an absolute direction: either Up or inward, and their respective opposite directions.

A.2. *Outer existence vs. inner experience*

We broached in the first paragraph the idea of penetrating all the way through existence (into a fundamental ground of Being). So, “*where* is existence?”. In both systems, existence and its objective observer are considered to be “exiled outside” at the periphery or surface of All-that-Is (the Universe), in contrast to the more central or subtle realms which we call, in contrast, ‘inside’ or ‘inner experience’.

Question: If existence is outside and peripheral, what is more central and inside? Answer: Intelligence, intentions, insights, feelings, and values are examples of what we call inner experience. These inner experiences ARE, they *BE*, but are not “outside”, not open to objective inspection.

Here are two kinds of “nonexistence” which have their own positiveness: Example#1, of a nonexistence which *BE* (*ists* without ex-ist-ing: the verb ‘to be’ corresponds to the ‘is’ of ‘ist’, and existence is in some sense exiled from pure concentrated being or “isting”): In physics a photon of light does not “exist” in the same sense that matter exists. When you look at a table, or even an electron, it persists

after you look at it. But the act of observation of a photon *annihilates* the photon: its angular-momentum and energy have been transferred to a molecule of rhodopsin in the retina of an eyeball, or absorbed by some other detector, but that particular photon has disappeared, been annihilated. Light lives, when it lives, in eternity, prior to time and space and matter(existence): light does not experience the passing of time, and the spacetime interval of light is zero, and it has no rest-mass/inertia, so $\text{Energy} = \text{mass} \times c^2$ is replaced by $E = \text{Planck-constant } h \times \text{frequency}$. Light lives in the world of *BEing*, not of becoming. (This fact is not well appreciated by some physicists, who think of the photon as “just another particle”.)

Example#2, of a nonexistence as a kind of nonbeing that nonetheless has consequences: In logic, the statements ‘All p are q’ and ‘No p is q’ each correspond to *nonexistence* in a logical-possibility, namely they state that the subsets $p.\text{minus}.q$ and $p.\text{intersection}.q$, respectively, are empty (contain no existence).

I claim that both systems—Young’s and Spencer-Brown’s—account not only for existence (physical objects) but also for a lightspace that one might, if one can perceive subtly- or quickly-enough, catch(glimpse) “out of the corner of one’s eye”. Or a halo of light radiating around a saintly person. And that both systems give a map of relationships giving understanding that integrally-relates our “inner” self and the “outside” World, needed since we are conscious beings whose experience encompasses both inner and outer.

B. PARSING

B.1. Parsing as a relation (structure) of parts to wholeness:

Parsing is not merely ‘taking apart’, but also selecting particular unit-parts and accounting as to: the kind of entity that each part is, and the relationships among the parts to each other and to the whole.

Example#1: A sentence can be parsed into the subject, the verb, etc. which are specific kinds of grammatical-parts.

Example#2: sensory parsing: One’s visual field might be parsed into, say, a chair and a person, which are specific kinds of entity, and moreover, foreground objects are parsed (selected) against background space: in some sense this is like highlighting the foreground against an unlighted background.

But most important is to retain the relationship of parts to their wholes and of wholes to Wholeness. Young says it well: “The ultimate goal is to regain the whole by knowing how the parts fit together.” (*Geometry of Meaning* p.xv)

B.1a. Note about my use of hyphens and ...

In this essay I have taken the liberty of using hyphens and/or single quote marks ‘ ’ and sometimes periods to bind, or sometimes subdivide, units of meaning. The reader will have already noticed that I have used hyphens to indicate that I am *connecting(binding)* some words into a unit-phrase, for example ‘All-that-Is’ in A.2 above. And in A.2. Example#1 I used the hyphens to *subdivide* the word ‘existing’ into ‘ex-ist-ing’ for reasons I detail there. In C.1. below in ‘stage.1’ I use a period to bind. And I will sometimes use single quote marks to enclose a phrase into a unit or subunit. For example in C.2. the following phrase which I enclose in quote marks is to be read as a single unit: ‘the-space-in-which the-thing *isn’t*’, where hyphens bind two subunits. In B. below, I use quote marks to bind ‘*what is*’ in ‘*what is*’ness, indicating that the ‘ness’ applies to the ‘*what is*’ rather than to the ‘*is*’. And in C.3. below I use a period to parse ‘selfUp.ness’, the ‘ness’ applying to ‘selfUp’, to not confuse it with ‘self-Upness’. And so on throughout the essay.

An ultimate parsing should resolve the chair and person in B.1. Example#2 above into the ultimate kinds of ‘*what is*’nesses that constitute them, and the relationships amongst the ‘*what is*’nesses, and, I propose, must include the physical light and/or the awareness by which or through which we see (notice or cognize, and recognize) the parts and relations. ...Only *after* you’ve noticed some thing or the space it is in, can it then be separated out and accounted for.

B.2. Reducing the multitude of different kinds of entities to three ontic Principals:

Young’s parsing system achieves a minimal list of the deepest possible ‘*what is*’nesses (see B.2a), each of which is directly knowable and qualitatively different from the others, with each quality explained by a corresponding structure: see C.6.

B.2a. Onto (being) and ontic:

We will use the adjective ‘ontic’, referring to *onto*, the Greek word for being, and the etymological root for ontology, that branch of philosophy concerned with being or ‘What Is’. Each fundamental ‘*what is*’ness is an ontic category.

Arthur Young once instructed me as follows: “anything goes”, but some things go further, so what goes furthest? Young had searched for the deepest understanding possible. It will turn out that Young’s ontology gives us a list of three deepest possible ‘*what is*’nesses, or core ontic categories or levels. No single term covers the entire constellation of meanings that each of the three ‘*what is*’nesses subsumes, so Young simply calls them, using *Roman* numerals, ‘level I’ ‘level II’, and ‘level III’. The ancients

called them (respectively) fire, water, and air. Young calls them potential, binding, and identity. In physics they correspond to light, nuclear particles, and atoms. I call them Wholeness, inertia, and differenceness. We could also describe them as, respectively: creative Source; persisting-change; and distinctness-as-differenceness along with its counterpart: the identity of the ‘what’ that has been made distinct.

Note: ‘Being’ is often contrasted with ‘becoming’ and with ‘nonbeing’, but we will use (abuse?) the adjective ‘ontic’ to include becoming and nonbeing as ontic categories, due to *their relation to being*. Being, becoming, and nonbeing correspond to levels I, II, and III, respectively.

Regardless of whatever names we may choose for them, Young's levels I, II, and III each enjoy the status of being experientially knowable, qualitatively different, and structurally distinct: see C.6.

B.2b. Ontic principals:

We will use the noun ‘principal’ to mean an entity that functions as a prince or chief who owns or collects or takes/absorbs into itself its own kin or kind.

Example#1: physical water: Raindrops collect into larger drops then flow in streams into the ocean: it is all just water, so water is the principal.

Example#2: The term ‘principal’ is used in mathematics to indicate the fundament which can “absorb” all that is generated from it into a totality called its ‘ideal’: the ideal of the prime-number two (the principal) is all of its multiples, namely all even numbers.

I will call each of Young's levels I, II, and III ‘ontic principals’, meaning fundamental ontic categories. Physical water is not a central enough entity, philosophically, to be an ontic principal, but physics’ quarks might qualify. Young assigns what the ancients called ‘water’ to his level II.

C. ARTHUR YOUNG’S THEORY OF PROCESS AS ONTOGENY: THE ORDER OF GENERATION FROM FIRST CAUSE.

C.1. The Reflexive Universe describes seven stages of process through four levels, and The Geometry of Meaning accounts for the four levels as divisions of Wholeness.

The system created by Arthur Young was called by him the Theory of Process. He detailed it in his two 1976 books *The Reflexive Universe: Evolution of Consciousness* and *The Geometry of Meaning*.

The Reflexive Universe (RU) is essentially descriptive, like a good naturalist. It shows that the processes of nature are more fundamental than the structures it forms. *RU* identified seven distinct phases or stages of process that express themselves though seven

kingdoms of Nature, as well as in mythologies, in spiritual doctrine, and in communication. Note: Young numbers the seven stages of his Theory of Process with *Arabic* numerals 1 through 7. I will denote them as ‘stage.1’ (instead of ‘stage 1’) etc. in order to form a single typographical unit. Recall from the previous section, on parsing, that Young’s fundamental ontic levels are level.I, level.II, and level.III, using *Roman* numerals. There is one more level: level.IV. Stages.1, 2, 3, & 4 inhabit Levels.I II, III, & IV, respectively: Roman numerals for the levels, and Arabic numerals for the stages. Level.I is on top, and the levels descend to the ontic “floor” at level.IV. Molecules (matter or “earth”) are stage.4 at level.IV. Then, from matter, Life acquires powers in stages, ascending back up: stage.5 at level.III and stage.6 at level.II until, with humans at stage.7 at level.I, “Creation comes at last to recognize itself” (*RU* p.254). Young’s ultimate breakthrough was in realizing that *action* is primary, rather than matter, or even process. (See ‘C.5a. Explication of the term ‘action’ below). Young calls stage.1 ‘potential’ (i.e. the potential to engender all that follows). We might also call it Source. I often call it Wholeness or potent-Wholeness. This potential is expressed as *fiat* or *action*: as creation, or as light.

The Geometry of Meaning (GM) “axiomatizes” *RU* from the principle that parts must be created by dividing an original unity or wholeness. *GM* states (p.xvi): “In this book...we postulate a *unity* whose divisions into aspects *creates* [the mass, time, and space of the physicist].” This unity at level.I can be represented as an undivided-circle. Then the circle can become “divied up” as one might slice a pie. *GM* is then able to correlate division-into-three with level.II, and division-into-four with level.III, and division-into-‘three-times-four’ with level.IV. (See Figure 1 in C.3. below.)

C.2. *Vignettes of levels.I, II, and III*

To give you a sense of Young’s levels in his *RU*, let’s begin from a “place” *before* being and knowing have been separated from each other, with the following three experiential-vignettes:

Vignette #I. With your eyes closed, imagine in front of you a space, a sphere of only bright light. Now imagine that the light gets dimmer and dimmer until the sphere is dark but still retains light’s potency-to-act: it is a darkness filled with creative potency, including the possibility of ‘*fiat lux*’.

Vignette #II. With your eyes closed, gently move your right-hand until it encounters some object, some thing or body that resists it: perhaps a chair. That resistance is called by physics inertia and mass.

Vignette #III. With your eyes open, select some particular object in your field of vision. Notice that: that-particular-object is not EveryWhere but instead has a definite

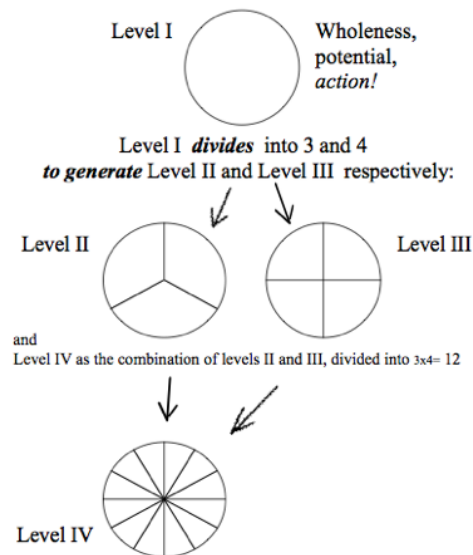
limit, a boundary. It is-inside-this-boundary but not-outside this-boundary. The boundary thus functions as a negation by separating inside from outside. The negation-itself makes a profound statement about the nature of the relationship between any thing and ‘the-space-in-which the-thing *isn’t*’.

I offer these three experiences as three ontic elements, or levels, with which to deeply, ultimately, parse Nature and our experience. We can call them, respectively: action and the-potential-for-action; substance/inertia; and abstract-form. To get a physical object like a chair, simply start with substance, then add form to limit-its-location, and ‘Voila! you have a physical object (formed substance).

C.3. *Dividing Wholeness:*

Young’s approach in his *GM* is to start with Wholeness, then *generate* parts by dividing wholeness, and to express entities, qualities, and interconnections as angles or angular-relations. It thereby *generates* mass, time and length, the three physical-quantities which parse the measure-formulae used by physics. Young assigns angular-relations to all these. (See *GM*, p49.) But in this paper we will use only the following: dividing wholeness into three, four, and thereafter twelve(=3x4), thereby generating level.II, level.III, and level.IV, respectively. See Figure 1 directly below.

Figure 1: Young’s ontology as Divisions of Wholeness



The wholeness, together with its threefold and fourfold divisions, constitute three natural ontic principals, which are Young's Levels I, II, and III in his theory. I explicate them as follows:

Level I: 'the selfUp.ness of being' and 'the selfUp.ness of already-completed-action!' (or the potential for it) e.g. light. It is the transcendent reality.

Level II: Down.ness having fallen from Upness into Substance/Time as a subsisting 3fold-magma of inertia-becoming. We don't yet know *what* it is but it has inertia (it resists us)...it is *There*, as substance.

Level III has the structure of the 90 degree angle or a 4fold division, which generates a constellation of properties: stasis, distinctness & identity (this-and-not-that), neutralness, insulation, boundaries/form/pattern, and simultaneity-space where time/change is "factored out", and it is ontically definite and objective (such as a concept or class) but is itself *unembodied*, as an idea or archetype living in the mind. (See 'C.4. Differenceness as insubstantial'.)

These three elements or levels are not unrelated: on the contrary, levels II and III are each generated by dividing Level I, into three and four respectively.

Note that: not-only does the Theory of Process *have* a definite ontic element that constitutes abstract-form and all-things-mental, but moreover the Theory postulates *how that abstract-element is generated* in the first place, namely "drawing-and-quarterming" (severing) wholeness.

The theory also has a Level IV, which is our physical world of objects, which have both form and substance, and are thus the combination of Level II with Level III, as Figure 1 shows.

C.3a. Aside: Compatibility of physical structure with underlying process principles

Directly above we parsed (conceptually decomposed) the level.IV molecules constituting physical objects into 'level.III form + level.II substance' (formed substance). You may protest that physics does not see the structure of molecules as "formed-substance". Clearly, molecules are made of atoms, and atoms are made of nuclear-particles, so that is physics' nested parsing. But the nuclear-particles have mass and therefore substance (inertia), and this mass takes-on structure (e.g. nuclear- and electron-orbital-structure) and thus 'form' in atoms and molecules, so the 'form + substance' also applies in physics' parsing.

C.4. Differenceness as insubstantial

We show, directly below, a sense in which boundaries themselves are, or reduce to, pure-difference, having zero substance and zero thickness.

Example: The aggregated molecules constituting your body are surrounded by air molecules. The skin of your body may be seen as its boundary, but is cosubstantial with (belongs to) your body. So what is the boundary between your skin molecules and the surrounding air molecules? This projected differenceness that we call the boundary-at (immediately outside) your skin *is not composed of molecules*. It is *projected by the mind* in order to try to distinguish something (your body) from something else (the surrounding air).

Of course there *are* barriers that are composed of molecules. For example a bottle containing water is a material boundary between the water inside and the air outside the bottle, but between the bottle and the water inside there are *no* boundary-molecules. *Bare differenceness*, such as the boundary between an object and its surround, is conceptual, not material, not substantial, and thus is *a principal distinct from* the substance which gives matter its mass (inertia).

C.5. Action and light as Wholeness

I characterize wholeness as ‘a functionally-potent integral of self-*up*.ness’.

In physics there *is* such an entity, namely action, which can sometimes be perceived as light. Light is pure-action: a photon of light is an all-or-nothing quantum-whole of Planck action having no rest-mass.

C.5a. Explication of the term ‘action’:

Action here is used with the meanings used in physics and mathematics: it does not mean activity but instead is a technical term in which the process of activity has been factored-away leaving an abstracted-essence of a completed-integral-action. Action occurs in physics as: ‘the quantum of action’ (Planck’s universal constant unit of action), and in ‘the principle of least-action’, as calculated by a Lagrangian or Hamiltonian action-integral. Action is used in mathematics when a function induces a structuring from something into something: this action *imparts functionality* to a space or structure, and is consistent with what I called functional-potency above.

C.5. continued

Below we explicate each of the three aspects (properties) I have assigned to Wholeness, action, and light.

Explication of up.ness: The quantum of action (which light *is*) is more-fundamental-than (ontically-prior-to, before the creation of) space or time or matter:

The physicist Archibald Wheeler said this. Action and its-special-case: light have an ‘up’ness in the sense of being transcendent-to, free of, outside of the bound system of matter in space-time, which, having inertia/mass, is heavy and thus “down”. Action and light are *unheavy* and ‘Up’.

Explication of integrality: Action in classical physics is an action-(calculus-)integral. In quantum physics, action and its special case - a photon - are integral in the sense of *indivisibility*: each all-or-nothing action is the same Planck’s universal constant quantum unit of action. And light is pure-action, having intrinsic-integral.spin (i.e. spin = the *integer* or *whole*-number ‘1’) of angular-momentum. (Note: action and angular-momentum have the same dimensionality ML^2/T). ...By contrast, protons and electrons have spin $\frac{1}{2}$, i.e. di-vided, *dis*-integral spin, and are parts, not wholes.

Explication of the term ‘functionally-potent’: Action, i.e. a completed-action, is by-definition functionally-potent, and light is functionally-potent in two senses: 1) light can *create* matter by annihilating-itself into a particle and antiparticle, called ‘pair production’; and 2) all chemical and molecular activity is associated with absorption and emission of photons.

For an example of light-as-upness outside of current-physics, consider the halo (of light) that has been reportedly seen around some saints, and is iconically depicted in the artwork of saints. A halo is ‘self-up’ in the sense that it does not attain upness by being supported below by some structure: No, it is *self*-Up, floating, as-it-were, around or above the head and body of the Saint. What is the correlation of a ‘self-up’ halo with Wholeness? A saint is one who is holy, and her self-up halo of holiness comes, spiritually as well as etymologically(‘kailo-’, from *being Whole*).

C.6. *Young’s ontology as both qualitative (the qualia of our inner experience) and quantitative (structural)*

Young’s ontology accounts for experientially *qualitatively*-different ontic categories (principals) by assigning to them *quantitatively*-different structures. Light, inertia, and difference are each *qualitatively* different and directly perceptible but perceived differently, in or by different registers, namely:

Light: the sensation of sight perceives physical light, and some inner faculties perceive other "lights" such as: the “aha!” recognition in insight, truth (“the light of truth”), and spiritual radiance.

A change of inertia is sensed either by touch, as in Vignette #II above, or felt viscerally as the sensation in the pit of your stomach when you are in an elevator and it drops down a floor.

Difference and lack-of-difference (equivalence or sameness) are a cognition of a mind or intellect.

So these three different ontic categories are *qualitatively*-different and directly-perceptible (as *qualia*) but perceived differently, in or by different registers. And Young's *Geometry of Meaning* assigns to each kind of *qualia*—light, inertia, and difference/sameness— *quantitative* (structural) differences, namely: undivided *versus* divided-in-three *versus* divided-in-four, which account-for their *qualitative*-properties. For example, in astrology, the structural-relation of 120° (trine) corresponds to smooth durating flow and thus “explains” one way that the 3fold division characterizes level.II, which subsumes Time's flow of becoming, metaphorically: "the river of Time") . Similarly, astrologically the 90° aspect (relation) corresponds to a crisis, where the flow has stopped and one needs to stop and think and decide. This corresponds to the mental realm at level III, with its conceptual distinctions.

We can summarize Young's ontology thusly: Divisions-of-Wholeness into three and four ontically generate and parse the Universe.

D. G. SPENCER-BROWN'S LAWS OF FORM

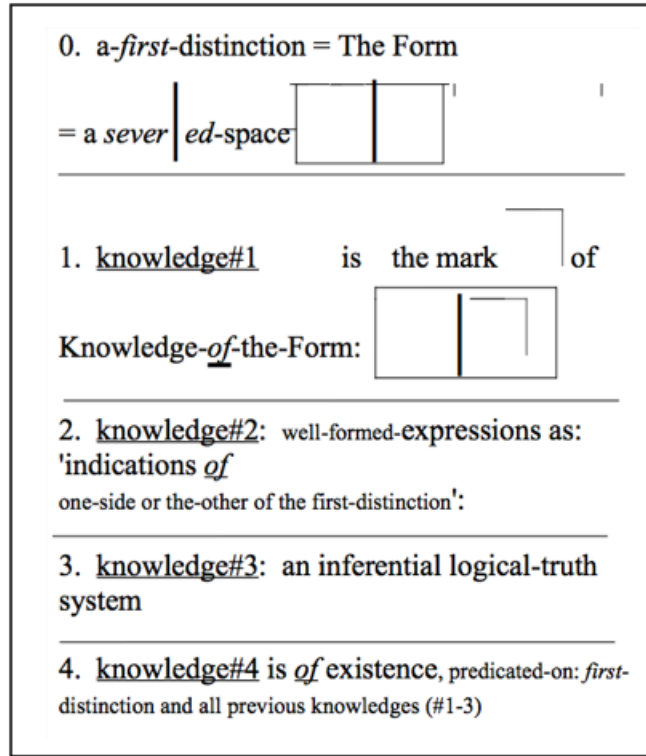
“...to experience the world clearly, we must abandon existence to truth, truth to indication, indication to form, and form to void...”

G. Spencer-Brown, *LoF* page 101

Whereas Arthur Young gives us an *ontological*-parsing of Nature, G. Spencer-Brown in his 1969 book *Laws of Form* (“*LoF*”) gives us a powerful *epistemological* tool to parse the emergence of knowledge of form—any form, including the construction of our knowledge of any possible universe. Knowledge may be more clearly understood as a partial unity of knower and known. And Spencer-Brown helps us see this connection clearly, as when the connection of knower to known is preserved even while the kind of knowledge known shifts from peripheral to central.

D.1 Knowledge based on The Form:

The *LoF* epistemology begins in the act of ‘severing or taking-apart a space’ by drawing some *first*-distinction. It is this initiating act that gives rise to Form. Knowledge *of* the Form comes by marking *only-one side* of the first-distinction with a mark: we can call this ‘rank#1 knowledge’, then rank#2-knowledge is knowledge *of* ‘indications-regarding knowledge#1’, then knowledge#3 is *of* an inferential logical-truth-system, and finally knowledge#4 is *of* existence. See Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Levels of knowledge in *Laws of Form* ranked by centrality

...We thus have a system—a “house of cards” of distinctions and their corresponding knowledges, based-on, predicated-on, a *first*-distinction. Later we will (mixing metaphors) “pull the plug” to collapse the “house of cards” while still retaining a knower.

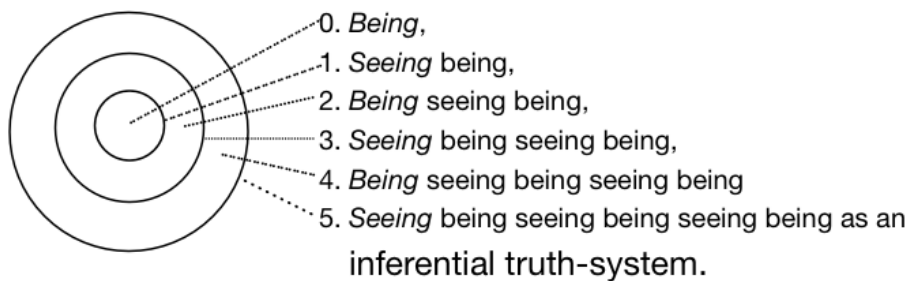
Note: There is a place in cognitive infrastructure where perception and imagination cannot be distinguished: it is the level of formed-expressions (taken to be indications) and qualifies as rank#2-knowledge-about-The-Form only if the formed-expression (i.e. a form taken as either perception or imagination) consistently indicates “rank#1 knowledge”.

D.2. Recursive Seeings

Actually *LoF* has its own ontology, a neoPlatonic ontology that merges Being with knowing in an interplay of *Being* and *Seeing*. *Being* is the primary given: let’s represent it as a bright-white-space. An-observer-*Seeing* (by ‘*seeing*’ we mean ‘cognition and/or recognition’) is at an-opposite-pole-of-Being: represent it as black. We can then

represent a recursive-interplay of concentric-outward-crossings,
 from 0. *Being*,
 to 1. '*Seeing* being' as a black-line-circumference surrounding being,
 to 2. '*Being seeing* being',
 to 3. '*Seeing* being *seeing* being',
 ...to a system of five outward-crossings, which corresponds to 'an inferential truth-system'. Spencer-Brown calls it a "crystalline Heaven". I call it 'a space-of-light structured by unembodied form'. See Figure 3 directly below.

Figure 3: Recursive Seeings



The diagram comes from writings by (Pseudo-)Dionysius the Areopagite. Not shown in Figure 3 is another circle, dotted, beyond 5. which corresponds to Time (becoming), and another circle beyond Time which corresponds to matter (existence), at the periphery.

D.3. Partial-unity of knower with known:

So, *LoF* has: a first-distinction, a mark of knowledge-of-The-Form, and an observer viewing expressions from the space outside and covering the expressions. Spencer-Brown ends the final (12th) chapter of his *LoF* with the following statement (p.76): "We see now that the first distinction, the mark, and the observer are not only interchangeable, but, in the form, identical." This situation constitutes an epistemic-partial-unity of knower with known, a partial-unity that was there from the beginning with the interplay of *Being* and its opposite-pole, *Seeing*.

D.4. "Pulling the plug": A collapse or retract of the levels of knowing, from the known to knower:

Spencer-Brown has also described (Preface of 1994 *LoF*) what he calls 'triple-identities' of three elements that are ontically-prior to existence. These triple-identities emerge with the first distinction. He says (top-page ix:) "...you cannot indicate anything

without defining two states, and you cannot define two states without creating three elements [two states and the boundary between them]. None of these exists in reality, or separately from the others. ...”

The thrust of this is that one might reverse the outward direction which *constructs* our knowledge of existence so that the structure “collapses” or de-constructs in steps as knowledge retracts to the *core*-reality, the-reality-of-*Being* that is a formal-*void*. (Note: We can formally equate *Being* with *void* in the sense that both *ActionBeing* and *void* are ontically-prior-to form and substance in Young’s ontology.) Spencer-Brown expresses this collapse as follows (*LoF* page 101): “to experience the world clearly, we must abandon existence to truth, truth to indication, indication to form, and form to void”.

We simply point out:

- that “to experience the world clearly” is to *parse* the world, and
- that this collapse-to-the-void *preserves knowledge* in such a way that ‘*what the-knowledge is knowledge-of*’ goes to more-central levels, *retracting* the knowledge from the known to knower, in: the crossings of kinds-of-knowledge: from existential, to logical, to perceptual-indications, to their basis in ‘The Form of a first-distinction’ then transcending-form to void, which may leave us with a *knowing-being*, with what might be called *gnos*ing, where the knower and known are *merged* (not fully-separated) in what Spencer-Brown, above, called a triple-identity: the triple may be described, using Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s translation from Sanskrit, as: knower, process-of-knowing, and known.

D.4a. An analogy from psychology:

The above ‘collapse-to-the-void in a knowledge-preserving-deconstruction’ has an analogy in what a Jungian-psychoanalyst would call ‘retracting ones projection’, namely: the *realization* that ‘the negativity that I find in someone or something in the world outside of me’ is, at a deeper level of understanding, negativity that I actually harbor *inside my own psyche* and *project-out-onto* the world. This retraction, when it occurs in the psyche, leaves one in a state of ‘knowing both the world and oneself in a *deep* and *wise* and *true* way’: *This is a proper-deep-parsing of ones experience and the world!*

In both the epistemic and psychological cases of ‘retracting (deconstructing) ones projection’, a deep connection and unification between inner-self and outer world is revealed.

E. CONCLUSION

G. Spencer-Brown’s vision from which he wrote *Laws of Form*, and Young’s Theory of Process, both show us, in different but compatible ways, how the parts of our outer and inner experience fit together orienting us towards Wholeness. In both systems, light

and higher-consciousness are at the level of unsevered Wholeness. Wholeness can be located above and beyond spacetime/matter, and also within the “navel” of everything. Between Wholeness and objective existence there is an infrastructure of intermediate levels.

Young’s system has four ontic levels, with existence parsing into substance and abstract-form, with substance and form each being *created* out of light/action/potent-Wholeness: substance by division-into-three, and form by severing (quartering). Young’s levels I, II, and III are each experientially knowable and qualitatively different, with each quality explained by a corresponding structure.

Once distinctness has been ontically created (by quartering Wholeness, per Young’s *GM*), Spencer-Brown’s *Laws of Form* outlines how an observer’s knowledge about perceptual-existence is ultimately constructed from an unsevered space by discerning a difference in value and then drawing a boundary between the values and marking *only*-one value, thereby giving knowledge of this first distinction, and then creating a space of expressions which may indicate either the marked or unmarked value, and then constructing a universal-inference-system which the assertion of a properly-classified-existence can logically-negate. We may perceive some object (a selectable form i.e. expression) in our perceptual field, and may take it to exist (rather than be an hallucination) *inasmuch as* it has inertia (relative to us). But in order to have any more knowledge about it than that “it” exists, we must have an infrastructure that relates this sensation of localized-inertia to other parts of our knowledge. LoF is such a system (an infrastructure), and it can be interpreted (applied) both mystically and logically/scientifically. When Schöpenhauer said “The world is my representation” (see Bibliography: Magee, page 143), I think he was speaking from a “cognitive place” very much like Spencer-Brown, having *seen all the way through existence* with his consciousness and intellect, and knowing his role in creating his perception of the World.

President, Institute for the Study of Consciousness
engstrom@lisco.com; johnsengstrom@gmail.com

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Magee, Bryan, *The Story of Thought*, 1998 New York: Quality Paperback Bookclub, DK Publishing, Schöpenhauer quote, page 143
Spencer-Brown, George, *Laws of Form*, (1969, 1972...) 1994 Portland OR: Cognizer Co.

Young, Arthur M., *The Geometry of Meaning*, 1976 Delacorte Press, & 2003 Cambria CA: Anodos Foundation

Young, Arthur M., *The Reflexive Universe: Evolution of Consciousness*, 1976 Delacorte Press, & 1999 Cambria CA: Anodos Foundation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Jean Burns and Michael Urheber for their valuable improvements to this paper.

–end.
